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THE
PULPIT AND ROSTRUM.

Sermons, Orations, Popular Lectures, etc.

SIGNS OF PROMISE:

A THANKSGIVING DISCOURSE.

BY THE REVEREND JOHN BODINE THOMPSON.

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THE PULPIT AND ROSTRUM,

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SCHERMERHORN, BANCROFT & CO.,
130 Grand Street, New York.

Rev. J. B. Thompson
Metuchen, N. J.

SIGNS OF PROMISE:

A THANKSGIVING DISCOURSE.*

ATTEND, ye Christian people, to the reading of the
proclamations in accordance with which we are here
assembled before God this day!

"It has pleased Almighty God to prolong our national life
another year, defending us with His guardian care against
unfriendly designs from abroad, and vouchsafing to us in His
mercy many and signal victories over the foe who is of our
own household.

"It has also pleased our Heavenly Father to favor us, as
well our citizens in their homes as our soldiers in their
camps, our sailors on the rivers and seas, with unusual health.

"He has largely augmented our free population by eman-
cipation and by immigration, while He has opened to us
new sources of wealth, and has crowned the labor of our
working men in every department of industry with abun-
dant reward.

"Moreover, He has been pleased to animate and inspire
our minds and hearts with fortitude, courage, and resolu-
tion sufficient for the great trial of civil war into which we
have been brought by our adherence, as a nation, to the

* Preached by The Reverend John Bodine Thompson, Pastor
of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, Metuchen, New Jer-
sey, November 24, 1864.

cause of freedom and humanity, and to afford to us reasonable hopes of an ultimate and happy deliverance from all our dangers and afflictions.

"Now, therefore, I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States, do hereby appoint and set apart the *last Thursday in November next* as a day which I desire to be observed by all my fellow-citizens, wherever they may be, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to ALMIGHTY God, the Beneficent Creator and Ruler of the Universe; and I further recommend to my fellow-citizens aforesaid that, on that occasion, they do reverently humble themselves in the dust, and from thence offer penitent and fervent prayers and supplications to the Great Dispenser of events for a return of the inestimable blessings of peace, union, and harmony, throughout the land which it has pleased Him to assign as a dwelling-place for ourselves and for our posterity throughout all generations.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

[I.S.] Done at the City of Washington, this twentieth day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-ninth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

God in his wisdom has afflicted this nation with civil war. It becomes us, as a people, reverently to humble ourselves, and asking forgiveness of the sins which brought this great calamity upon us, to pray that the remainder of wrath may be restrained, and that the rod of our chastisement may soon be removed.

But in the midst of deep affliction, we should not be unmindful of the numerous blessings that have been bestowed, and should offer fervent thanks to our Heavenly Father for His infinite mercy.

Impressed by these sentiments, and desiring publicly to recognise God as the Sovereign Ruler of nations, I, JOEL PARKER, Governor of the State of New Jersey (in accordance with the custom in this State), do hereby designate and appoint the *last Thursday of November, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four*, as a day of Thanksgiving and Prayer; and I do recommend to the people, on that day, to

assemble in their usual places of public worship, to give thanks to Almighty God for the many blessings vouchsafed to us during the past year; and in prayer humbly to supplicate that peace, with the Union, may be restored, and the lawful authority of the Government be reëstablished; and to ask forgiveness for all sins, through the merits of Him who is the Mediator and Saviour of mankind.

Given under my hand and privy seal, at Trenton, the twelfth day of November, A.D. eighteen hundred and sixty-four.

JOEL PARKER.

“Sing aloud unto God our strength;
 Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
 Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel,
 The pleasant harp with the psaltery.
 Blow up the trumpet in the new moon,
 In the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.
 For this was a statute for Israel,
 And a law of the God of Jacob.
 This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony,
 When he went out through the land of Egypt;
 Where I heard a language that I understood not.
 I removed his shoulder from the burden;
 His hands were delivered from the pots.
 Thou calledst in trouble—and I delivered thee;
 I answered thee in the secret place of thunder;
 I proved thee at the waters of Meribah.* Selah.”†

Blessed is the people whose princes revere the living God who ruleth in the kingdom of men. He removeth kings and setteth up kings. He judgeth among the nations. The powers that be are ordained of God. The nations of the earth are accountable to God. Individuals receive in the future world rewards or punishments according to the deeds done in the body, but *nations have no hereafter*. Hence the God of nations executes justice and judgment upon

* Or *strife*.

† Ps. lxxxi. 1-7.

them in this world according to that they have done, whether it be good or whether it be bad. It is proper and becoming, then, for us as a people to acknowledge the goodness of Him who hath not dealt so with any nation. He led our fathers by a way which they knew not. When, persecuted for righteousness' sake, they fled hither from the father-land, as to a city of refuge, God meant it for good. When the dragon persecuted the woman she fled into the wilderness, and there "the earth helped the woman;"—and not only the earth, but every creature of God, according to His gracious plans for us. Through the yesty waves of anarchy and revolution He brought forth His people with a strong hand and mighty arm, and established our goings, and set our feet upon a rock, and hath not forsaken the seed of them that feared Him. Patriotism and piety, then—the love of country and the love of God—alike prompt to this solemn act of thanksgiving and praise.

"Let the people praise Thee, O God;
Let all the people praise Thee.
Then shall the earth yield her increase,
And God, even our own God, shall bless us."

God doth bless us. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. He hath done us good, giving us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And this day gladly, joyfully, as the spirit of thanksgiving and praise worketh in our hearts, forsaking and forgetting all the cares of life, we meet in our solemn assembly, and, in manner and form approved by our consciences, unite with each other and with our fellow-citizens of other States in giving thank-offerings and praise to Almighty God for all temporal and spiritual gifts. The only praise that God accepts is the willing praise of a grateful heart. His people are free-will offerings in the day of His

power. And such praises as we thus unitedly bring to-day are pleasing to Him; for this was a statute for Israel:

"This *He ordained* in Jacob for a testimony."

We know, then, that such formal acts of national thanksgiving are according to His will.

Especially have we in New Jersey cause for gratitude that, while many thanksgiving proclamations would be as appropriate to those who worship Boodh or Brahm, ours recognise Jehovah-Jesus, our covenant God and King. They exhort us to pray "for the poor, the sick, the neglected, the oppressed; for the diffusion of pure and undefiled religion, the only true safeguard of our liberties; and, *above all*, that each of us may finally be led by penitence and faith in the merits of the Divine Redeemer to enjoy the blessed consummation of the Christian's hope in heavenly rest."* They recommend us to "offer united thanks to Almighty God for His goodness to us, as manifested *above all* by the inestimable gift of His dear Son Jesus Christ; for all the blessings of free salvation through Him; for the means of grace and the hope of glory."† And they beseech us to "ask forgiveness for all our sins, through the merits of Him who is the Mediator and Saviour of mankind."‡

"Blessed is the people that is in such a case,
Yea, happy is that nation whose God is the LORD."

We do well, then, to cherish the pleasant associations and sweet recollections which cluster round Thanksgiving-day. The precious memories of our nation's birth and growth, as well as the blessings of the current year, the savory joys of our childhood's delight,

* Gov. Newell's proclamation, 1859.

† Gov. Olden's proclamation, 1862.

‡ Gov. Parker's proclamation, 1864.

the feast of fat things, the flow of soul and the soberer mirth of family unions round the festal board, conspire to augment our joy.

Nor is this annual festivity, nor the manner of its observance, a thing of trifling import. It furnishes an appropriate occasion for the pastor to teach, and for the people to reflect upon the points where the spheres of civil and religious duty touch each other. And in these days, when godlessness decries the piety that rules a man's business and politics as well as his Sabbath services, it is important to keep it continually before the mind that if there is any man whose religion does *not* influence and regulate his politics, *that man's religion is vain*. This day is an efficient aid to government; not only as affording opportunity for instruction and reflection respecting the objects and nature of government, but also as freeing men in degree from the fretfulness and insubordination which the wearisomeness of daily toil tends to produce. The humanizing effects of the rest and social joy, and especially of the grateful devotion of this day, are felt throughout the year. The Christian, moreover, rejoices in it as entitling the nation to the fulfilment of the promise: "Them that honor me, I will honor,"—at the hand of Him who hath said:

"Thou shalt rejoice in thy feast,—
Thou and thy son and thy daughter,
Thy man-servant and thy maid-servant,
The Levite, and the stranger,
The fatherless and the widow
That are within thy gates."

In accordance with the proclamations of our President and our Governor, we have, with reverent humility, been supplicating "the Great Dispenser of events for a return of the inestimable blessings of

peace, union, and harmony throughout the land ;"—we have prayed that "the lawful authority of the government may be reëstablished," and have asked "forgiveness for all our sins through the merits of Him who is the Mediator and Saviour of mankind." It but remains for us to "give thanks for the many blessings vouchsafed to us during the past year." Besides God's unspeakable gift—always the chief cause for gratitude—and the ordinary blessings of providence, we have specified four great causes for thanksgiving this day :

I. We have to thank God for *the preservation of our national life*. "It has pleased Him to prolong our national life another year, defending us with His guardian care against unfriendly designs from abroad, and vouchsafing to us in His mercy many and signal victories over the enemy who is of our own household."

1. We have learned at last to acknowledge our subjection to the God of nations. Formerly we boasted in our own strength as in a God, and burned incense to the net our own fingers had woven. We said in our hearts

"My good right hand, be thou my God! and sword
I hold, ye twain alone now favor me!"

Who but remembers the fulsome flatteries with which we nauseated ourselves on every recurrence of our national birthday! Even where God was acknowledged in words, how much more numerous as well as sincere, were the words which we spake of *our arms, our forces, our resources*—those very arms, and forces, and resources which have since been turned against us! We were proud of everything "American." We boasted of our patriotism,

our valor, our intelligence, our *religion* ! - We were scarcely able to utter our delight at the increase of our wealth. "Look," we said to the stranger, "at our great cities that have sprung up as if by magic ! Look at our inland seas whitened with the sails of countless ships, where but recently the red man lazily paddled his canoe ! Look at this vast network of railroads, the proof at once of our enterprise, skill, and resources ! Nay, like Egypt, who grew proud of her Nile, and said, 'My river is my own,' we boasted exceedingly of our natural resources, and took glory to ourselves for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof. Consider, we said, our mountains of coal and iron, our mines of lead and of copper, of silver and of gold ! One part of the Mississippi valley, we boasted, can supply raiment, and the other food to all the world. Think of our endless variety of climate ! Behold our foreign commerce ! Is not this great Babylon that *I* have built, by the might of *my* power, and for the honor of *my* majesty ?" And while the word was yet in our mouths there fell a voice from heaven, saying : "To thee it is spoken—the kingdom is departed from thee !" Happy we if it be only till "seven times" pass over us, and we "know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." Nay, happy we that *are* learning this truth. We no longer boast in our own strength. We no longer ignore the Divine Government. Our rulers acknowledge God. Our political parties nominate for highest office men who love to proclaim their trust in Him.

Our Generals no more choose the Sabbath for reviews and battles. The hearts of the Christian people of the land do not go so strongly after their "covetousness which is idolatry." Our treasure has melted away in war, and we have learned that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." Our boasted strength has died with the thousands whom we loved; and we have learned to say: "The LORD reigneth!" "When He slew them, then they sought Him." Happy is that people whom the Lord humbleth, that He may exalt them in due season; "for whom the LORD loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." God is proving us at the waters of Meribah. We have reason to thank Him for the chastisement which is an evidence of His love. If it had pleased the Lord to destroy us, then would he not have brought us hitherto. Then would He have left us to be filled with our own devices. But now hath He chastened us for our good. His Spirit accompanies His providence, and we recognise His hand. With reverence and humility we bless Him this day for the chastisement that He has sent upon us. From the very deep of our affliction do we gather the first of our signs of promise for the future.

2. "He has defended us with His guardian care against unfriendly designs from abroad." Other governments are looking upon us with jealous eyes. They are ready to take advantage of any safe opportunity to secure our destruction in the promotion of their own interest. Shame to say, selfishness, with a total disregard of the welfare of others, is the public and avowed policy of most of the governments of the civilized (!) world. And cunning enemies are continually inciting other nations to hate us. But

against their machinations we have thus far been defended by our God. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water; He turneth it whithersoever He will."

"If it had not been the LORD who was on our side,
Now may Israel say,—
If it had not been the LORD who was on our side
When men rose up against us,—
Then they had swallowed us up quick,
When their wrath was kindled against us :
Then the waters had overwhelmed us,—
The stream had gone over our soul,—
Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.
Blessed be the LORD who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.
Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers ;
The snare is broken, and we are escaped.
Our help is in the name of the LORD
Who made heaven and earth !"

3. "He has vouchsafed to us in His mercy many and signal victories over the enemy who is of our own household." We are suffering from war. And it is not an enemy that hath done this; then we could have borne it. But it is our brethren. With them in days past we took sweet counsel together. To them, for the most part, we entrusted the management of our national affairs. Being lifted up with pride, they have fallen into the condemnation of the devil. Grown rich and insolent on the labor of others, they assume to subvert the very foundations of government, that they may make themselves princes in the earth. For the accomplishment of this design they would destroy as by a blow all that has been reared by preceding generations to liberty, to intelligence, to virtue. If the government of this nation is a blessing to the world, if it is a blessing to God's church, if it helps on the cause of truth and righteousness in the earth,

then are they who attempt its destruction joining hands against God and man. Then do

“The rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD, and against His anointed, saying,
‘Let us break their bands asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.’

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh;
The LORD shall have them in derision.
Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath,
And vex them in His sore displeasure.
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

From the time in which we began to call upon God as a nation hath He helped us. On many a battle-field whose name is the signal for joy too boisterous for the house of God, on the broad savannahs, in the deep valleys, on the mountain-tops, above the very clouds, have our victorious legions charged upon the foe who fled before them. On all sides has the rebellion been repressed, and through the midst thereof our brave men are now marching while the enemy in vain essay to stop their course. Two-thirds of the territory wrongfully seized has been rescued, and to-day from the soil of every State from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the lakes of the North to the sunny Mexican sea, goes up the voice of thanksgiving to Almighty God at the bidding of our Chief Magistrate. “He hath not dealt so with any nation.” “Blessed is he who hath the God of Israel for his help; and whose hope the LORD is!”

II. We thank Him for *health*. “It has pleased our Heavenly Father to favor us, as well our citizens in their homes as our soldiers in their camps, and our sailors on the rivers and seas, with unusual health.”

1. No epidemic has raged among us. Nosickness has wasted our strength. We have not been

“ afraid for the terror by night,
Nor for the arrow that flieth by day,
Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness,
Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.”

Through His blessing we have been strong to labor by day ; and at night have laid ourselves down and slept, and awaked, for the Lord sustained us.

2. By His good Spirit our soldiers and sailors have been so cared for as were never any before. The Sanitary Commission in the name of God and humanity, and the Christian Commission in the name of Christ, have bountifully supplied their needs. Many a voice on many a battle-field, and in many a hospital and camp, has hushed its groans and well nigh forgot its pain, to pray “ God bless those who thus bless us !”

3. Nor need I tell you of the provision for the health of the soul. In no other army, save one perhaps, was ever such care taken of the souls of men. And we shall show to day the depth and sincerity of our thanksgivings to Jehovah-Jesus, by the liberality with which we contribute to the funds of the Commission which cares for both the bodies and the souls of those who peril themselves in the high places of the field for us.

III. We thank God to-day for the *increase and prosperity of our free population*. “ Our Heavenly Father has largely augmented our free population by emancipation and immigration, while He has opened to us new sources of wealth, and has crowned the labor of our working men in every department of industry with abundant reward.”

1. Never have wages been higher ; never has labor been more in demand than now. Never was the

country more prosperous than now. New railroads are bringing distant places near to market, and affording labor and bread to thousands of mouths. The discoveries of oil and of coal, as well as of gold and of silver and of iron, are settling the forests and the deserts with those who now have bread enough and to spare, who before suffered from hunger; and over all floats the banner of freedom.

2. Countless thousands who have suffered oppression, whose most arduous labor in their native lands could scarce suffice to satisfy their hunger, are finding on these shores both freedom and competence. Here no one whom God blesses with health need lack for food and raiment. Hence, here they gather from every soil and every clime. Notwithstanding the drain caused by the war, we have two hundred and fifty thousand more men, strong men of full age, to-day, than we had before the war began. And we have land enough for all who come. They are welcome. Each adds to the producing power of our country, as well as to the number of freemen in the world. God hasten the time when *all* shall be free to enjoy the proper fruits of their labor!

3. He *is* hastening it. "He has largely augmented our free population by emancipation." He is doing this in order that men may be free to serve Him.

(1.) He requires men to serve Him with all their powers ceaselessly; and for such service He holds each man accountable. It would seem, then, that no person ought to have such authority over another as may prevent the use of all his powers in God's service, according to the judgment of his own will. Each man's time, and talents, and money, should be subject to his own control, that he may serve his God therewith. From these teachings of natural religion,

it would seem that chattel slavery is opposed to God's rule over men.

(2.) But the Christian religion goes further than this. The ruling principle of its action is: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Now no one will pretend to prefer slavery to freedom *for himself*, and this *settles* the question so far as the principles of Christianity are concerned. The Millennial glory is to consist in the complete harmony of the will of each man with the will of Christ, evinced by each man's living wholly for Christ; and no one has ever had the inconsistency or hardihood to propose the continuation of slavery during that period. The more rapidly the Church approaches that day, the more thoroughly the spirit of the Head pervades the members, the sooner will *all* that is inconsistent therewith be done away; and slavery—"that red-handed thing of the eldest beast"—let go the bonded millions that she holds, rejoicing with the world's jubilee.

(3.) It may be profitable for us to look at this subject in the light we now have. Of the nations professing Protestant Christianity, we only hold slaves. We only uphold slavery. The sentiment of the civilized and Christian world has long been strong against it. But we have loved it. At least we have loved the results of it. We have loved the cheap cotton, and rice, and sugar, which were cheap because those who raised them were robbed of their earnings. We have loved the wealth and the honor which these purchased for our nation; and we could not see the iniquity as God sees it. We were blinded by our prejudices. We fawned upon those who revelled in wealth obtained by oppression; and all the while the cries of those whose wages were kept back, were entering into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. But

God is teaching us. He is showing us that the habits of mind and body engendered by slaveholding are inimical to free government; that they tend directly towards aristocratic and monarchical views and customs; that they enfeeble both mind and body, encourage vice, dignify idleness, and bring destruction in their train. He is enabling us to see that "slavery" and "freedom" are contradictory terms, and that slavery is a curse to slaveholders and the nation which they constitute.

(4.) It is true that much good has been accomplished through slavery. Thousands on thousands are now rejoicing before the throne of God, who, in their native wilds, would never have heard of Jesus. But it was none the less evil to enslave them. God brought good out of the sale of Joseph by his brethren; "God *meant it* for good;" but it was none the less evil in them. The most wicked act the world ever saw—the judicial murder of our Lord Jesus Christ—was a part of God's plan for the redemption of the world; but it was none the less sin on the part of those who crucified the Lord of glory.

(5.) It is also true that most of the slaves of the present day are not competent to use their freedom aright; that most of them were inherited by their masters; and that it would have been barbarous cruelty to free them at once. They should, however, have been regarded and treated as human beings, whose souls are equal in value to those of their masters. They should have been taught to labor and to think intelligently, to read the word of God, that they might know and do His will. Many individuals, Christian and philanthropic men and women among the slaveholders, did attempt, or at least allow this. And blessed were the results where attempted. I bless God for those who, not few in number, had the

moral courage to violate both law and custom when law and custom were opposed to the law of God. But what were these among so many! And the *system* was degrading. It was readily perceived that "knowledge is power"—that intelligence is incompatible with slavery; and many of the States passed laws making it a penal offence to teach a slave to read. The whole system was arranged to reduce these men and women as nearly as possible to the level of the beast. It was designed that they should be beasts of burden to their masters. Studious care was taken to prevent intellectual development. Religion of a certain kind was encouraged—an ignorant, blind, emotional religion—which might save the master's property, and, perhaps, save his conscience; but this was all. What kind of a religion *could* it be without the Bible? God requires parents to train their children for Him. But these parents were not allowed to train their children at all. In the States most severely punished by this war, children were habitually raised for market on the same plan and with the same care as beasts of the stall. Nay, more, the marriage-tie was ruthlessly broken; husbands and wives whom God had joined together, man put asunder; and, when put asunder, compelled to submit to such enormities and to join in such sins as would have defiled Sodom. God's people were among these slaves. But on the side of their oppressors was power; and, like Jeroboam the son of Nebat, they *made* Israel to sin. Such was the practical working of the *system*, notwithstanding the many personal exceptions to which I have already given due credit. *States* must be punished for their sins in this world; and is it any wonder that wrath comes upon the guilty to the uttermost?

"The mill of the gods grinds slowly;" but it

grinds exceeding fine. "Whom God wishes to destroy, He first makes mad." The madness of rebellion is the beginning of the punishment for sins which had long deserved destruction. The hire of the laborers, so long kept back by force and fraud, has long been crying for vengeance against the oppressors; and now their riches are corrupted and their garments moth-eaten; their gold and silver is cankered, and the rust thereof is eating their flesh as it were fire. "When the tale of bricks is doubled then Moses comes;" and when the iniquities of chattel slavery have reached their climax, then God appears to deliver the oppressed and to punish the oppressor. "By terrible things in righteousness dost Thou answer us, O God of our salvation." Those who had lived in pleasure in the earth and been wanton, are in straits for bread. And those who were enslaved are set free. Not by the will of man, but of God.

"When he went out through the land of Egypt
 (Saith the Lord),
 I removed his shoulder from the burden;
 His hands were delivered from the pots.
 Thou calledst in trouble,
 And I delivered thee.
 I answered thee in the secret place of thunder;
 I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah."

By the very constitution of our national Government no interference could be made with slavery. But when the slaveholders became traitors and public enemies, they forfeited *all* their privileges under the Government. Still slavery was untouched. Even when one and another of our Generals declared slaves *contraband of war*, and proceeded to use them in subduing the rebellion, their acts and words were disavowed by the Government, and they compelled to recede from their positions. And, though the war

had been going on for three years, not until positive assurances were received from our Ministers abroad that unless we proclaimed "freedom throughout all the land to *all* the inhabitants thereof," Foreign Powers would end the contest by recognising our opponents as a nation, not till then, as the last resort, was issued the proclamation which gives the slaves of those in rebellion the legal right to be "FOR EVER FREE!" So hard was it for us to yield. So determined were we in resisting God's purpose. Moved only for our own interest, we were nevertheless moved by the hand of God; and now a quarter of a million freemen, once slaves, are in the service of the country; whilst a full million of old men, of women, and of children, rise up no more at the bidding of the taskmaster. Taught by our experience, the slaveholders themselves are about to arm and free their slaves. Thus does God reach on both sides those whom He designs to free. *God means the end of slavery.* If those who held slaves had trained them for ultimate freedom, the transition might have been comparatively easy. If we who had shared in the profits of their labor had been willing to share in the expense of peaceful emancipation, it would have been better for them and for us. But we all were covetous, and therefore blind. And we all helped to rivet more and more firmly the chains of servitude, until God was compelled to do His strange work. We would not free the slave as we might, and He does it as He must.

But He does it effectually. In the city of New Orleans alone there are now *ten thousand* colored children in free schools, schools in which the bible is the text-book; and there are many times that number in other places, receiving instruction. Under the teachings of the war, Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee are looking towards the abolition of involun-

tary servitude. Arkansas and Louisiana are free States, with a good hope of being able to maintain themselves as such. And Maryland, "My Maryland!" is consecrated to freedom and to union for evermore! The war must and will go on until God's design is surely accomplished. His counsel shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure.

(6.) It is probably true that the emancipated suffer much more than they would have suffered as slaves. "It is the nature of the devil of tyranny to tear and rend the body which it leaves. But are the miseries of continued possession less terrible than the struggles of the tremendous exorcism!" The Israelites suffered more in the wilderness than they did in Egypt. Nay, that generation all *died* in the wilderness. But on the fortunes of that band of emancipated slaves hung the destiny of the world. The emancipated slaves of this day may suffer and die, as did their prototypes. But suffering and death are not the worst evils that can befall men. Debasement and death of soul are worse. And if God fills the places of debased slaves and debased slaveholders with a new generation, taught in the furnace of affliction to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God, who shall say that He has not dealt mercifully with the world? In the long and bloody wars of Canaan, each party at times seemed near extermination. But in process of time the land became densely populated with a people loving and serving God,—and from the soil which formerly drank the blood of human sacrifices went up the souls of generation after generation of those who lived and died and entered into glorious rest, as the result of the discipline to which the nation had been subjected in its youth. "The years of God are long." And, whatever may seem, God reigns.

"Evil is only the slave of good ;
Sorrow the servant of joy ;
And the soul is mad that refuses food
From the meanest in God's employ."

The future of the freedmen none can foresee. But that emancipation, with all its untold evils, is to issue in good both to them and to their masters, to the nation, and to the race, is clear to him who looks at the events of Providence in the light of revelation. When a nation is born in a day, or "born again," he must be an inexperienced observer who can mistake the throes of birth for the agonies of death.

IV. Finally, we have great cause to thank God to-day for *the resolute loyalty of our citizens*. "It has pleased Him to animate and inspire our minds with fortitude and courage, and resolution sufficient for the great trial of civil war into which we have been brought by our adherence as a nation to the cause of freedom and humanity, and to afford to us reasonable hopes of an ultimate and happy deliverance from all our dangers and afflictions."

1. Round the person of a king, and round the attendants of a court, gather personal attachments such as find no place in a republic. It was not known till now whether, apart from such attachments, the feeling of loyalty to government could be sustained under strong temptation. The quadrennial change of our Supreme Magistrate hinders the growth of those ardent attachments which have made so many willing to live or to die for king and country. But, instead hereof, has been developed an attachment to free government and the principles which underlie it, which is a far nobler quality of the soul. In the tendency to selfishness and insubordination which preceded this war, many feared that patriotism was well-nigh dead ; but the first gun fired on Sumter

showed that it was "not dead, but sleeping." The reverberations of that discharge aroused at once the long dormant feeling, and in every city and hamlet of the loyal States the people met, without distinction of party, to testify their adherence to the government, and their faithfulness to the flag of their fathers. From that day to this the necessary sacrifices of time, of treasure, and of blood have been readily made. The spirit of '76 is not extinct. It took our fathers nine years to establish the government which has blessed us for three-fourths of a century; and every principle of gratitude and duty, as well as of honor and patriotism, prompts us to preserve and perpetuate it for the good of succeeding generations, though the struggle last ninety and nine years. The government which blesses us must bless also our children. The stars in the firmament and those in the flag must grow pale together; and its stripes be obliterated only with the flickering of the last flame at the general conflagration. The government must and will be perpetuated:

"For right is right, since God is God,
And right the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin."

2. The country is loyal. The people have spoken. And spite of all the mistakes and errors, spite of all the waste of blood and treasure, spite of all the wickedness of wicked men, spite of the many drafts and long-continued war, spite of the bickerings of party and the ravings of

"Vaulting ambition which o'erleaps its sell,"

spite of any and all the countless temptations to disloyalty,—the people are loyal. From Maine and

Maryland on the one side, to Oregon and California on the other, they testify their adherence to the supremacy of the Federal Government. The Western States, where conspiracy and temptation were strongest, speak loudest ! Henceforth, let no man despair of the Republic. Through the judicial blindness of certain self-constituted party leaders, the people have been enabled to signify their preference for "Union" or "Disunion;" and the decision is made, a decision so clear and unmistakable as to furnish proper cause of thanksgiving to every patriot in the land.

3. Nor is it less cause of thanksgiving that those who could not at the time rise above the toils of party, acquiesce so heartily in the decision. The mists of prejudice are cleared away. The dust of the arena has settled, and men now see clearly what they could not see through the thick clouds of party strife. Such union of sentiment is the harbinger of success, an additional ground of hope "of an ultimate and happy deliverance from all our dangers and afflictions," and, therefore, doubly a cause for thanksgiving.

4. But our loyalty must not stop here. Loyalty is devotion to the government, not merely to men or to measures. There is great danger in a free government when there is little or no opposition to the party in power. Loyal men, then, of whatever party, must not hesitate to oppose every wrong proposition. The party in power would be more than human if they were not likely to attempt some plan or scheme to which the possession of power prompts, more than love of right. Let loyal men, therefore, be on their guard. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Beware of the entanglements of party. Set your faces as a flint against everything that is wrong, from

whatever source. Let "God and our country" be the motto of our political lives, and not the miserable Satanic watchword: "The party, right or wrong." Let the word of God be the test by which we try every measure. Let the voice of public opinion be heard always *for the right*. So shall success crown our efforts. So shall peace return to our land. So shall prosperity attend us. So shall righteousness exalt the nation:

"And God, even our own God, shall bless us;—

God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."

In the confident hope, through the merit and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ, of these and all other needed blessings, let us give thanks to God this day for all that he has done and is doing in our behalf.

"Sing aloud unto God our strength;
Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel,
The pleasant harp with the psaltery.
Blow up the trumpet in the new moon,
In the time appointed, on our solemn feast day."

And now, "Go your way! eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared,—for this day is holy unto our LORD; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the LORD is your strength!"

And, the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Joseph be upon you!

"Blessed of the LORD be this land,
For the precious things of heaven,
For the dew,
And for the deep that coucheth beneath,
And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun,
And for the precious things put forth by the moon,
And for the chief things of the ancient mountains,

And for the precious things of the lasting hills,
And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof,
And for *the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush !*"

He hath not dealt so with any nation ! He hath
delivered us, and doth deliver ; in whom we trust
that He will yet deliver us !

Blessed be the LORD the God of Israel,
Who only doth wondrous things !

And blessed be His glorious name for ever !

And let the whole earth be filled with His glory !

AMEN AND AMEN.

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